

REMARKS

The above amendment is made in response to the Office Action mailed February 9, 2004. Claims 1, 3, 4, 11-13, 15 and 29 have been amended. Claims 1-32 are pending in the present application and stand rejected. The Examiner's reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the above amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 1-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosin et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,295,057) (hereinafter "Rosin") in view of Williams et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,945,988) (hereinafter "Williams").

Claim 1 has been amended to claim, "specifying a graphic representation depicting a state of the instance, said graphic representation comprising graphic symbols representing each of the users." The combination of Rosin and Williams do not teach or suggest the recited limitations.

Claim 15 has been amended to claim, "said social interaction genre enables a first user to ask a question to a second user, the second user to ask for clarification to the question to the first user, and the second user to answer the question to the first user." The Office Action cites col. 10, lines 19-23 of Williams as disclosing "wherein said user's requests include requesting to ask a question." (Paper no. 12, page 4, no. 13). Col. 10, lines 19-23 of Williams teaches training the entertainment system using an on-screen questionnaire, wherein the user is asked to select from a list of program genres that he/she enjoys watching. In Williams, the system is asking the question via a questionnaire rather than the user. Further, the Office Action cites col. 7, lines 52-62 as disclosing "wherein said user's requests include a request for a clarification." (Paper no. 12, page 5, no. 14). Col. 7, lines 52-62 teach updating and refining user preference information by monitoring

user interaction with the entertainment system. Clearly, the recited portion of Williams does not teach or suggest a user requesting clarification. Accordingly, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest “said social interaction genre enables a first user to ask a question to a second user, the second user to ask for clarification to the question to the first user, and the second user to answer the question to the first user,” as claimed in claim 15.

The Office Action groups its rejection of claim 1 and claim 29 together, noting only the limitations of claim 1. Applicants submit that this is entirely improper as claim 29 includes distinguishable limitations not present in claim 1. The Examiner is required to address each and every limitation of the claims. In particular, the Office Action has not addressed at least the following limitations of claim 29: (1) “receiving requests from the plurality of users to participate in a live computer-mediated social interactive discussion between the users, each of said users represented by a graphical symbol”; (2) “registering said users by storing user identifications and passwords of respective users”; (3) “storing said identifications and passwords in a user database”; (4) “authorizing said users as participants in the interactive discussion upon receiving a clearance signal”; (5) “setting parameters and rules governing the interactive discussion and informing the participants of the parameters and rules”; (6) “enforcing penalties upon participants violating said rules”; and (7) “indicating on the graphical symbols the participants violating said rules.”

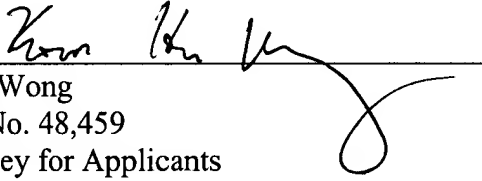
Appellants further respectfully submit that the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest the above-recited limitations of claim 29.

Accordingly, amended claims 1, 15 and 29 are believed to be patentably distinguishable and nonobvious over the combination of Rosin and Williams. Dependent

claims 2-14, 16-28 and 30-32 are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons given for independent claims 1, 15 and 29. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-32 is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all the claims now pending in the application are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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